SRI ODIYA BABAJI MAHARAJ
(The embodied Brahman)
THE HOLY OCCASIONS (or Interactions)
SHRI ODIYA BABA

CONTENTS

My first Meeting

It was Pratisthanpur or Jhusi, a colony in a holy place called Prayaga (i.e. Allahabad), also known as the Teertharaj (the crown among the holy places). The occasion was of Akhanda hari-nama-sankirtana Yajna (the ritual of constant chanting of Harinama) organised by Brahmachari Shri Prabhudatta-ji Maharaj. In this occasion I was discoursing on Shrimat- Bhagavatam. There was a huge open auditorium, a gorgeous throne for the speaker, a gathering of innumerable people, the presence of the extra- ordinary great souls among them and the topic was Gopi-gitam (the song of Gopis). As I was narrating like this, 'the nectar of Krishna-katha is superior to the heavenly nectar'. Suddenly, there appeared a great Soul without causing even the least disturbance to the discourse, and took his seat on the sand facing the speaker. He assumed a siddhasana with his head erect and appeared brilliant and divine. There was a smile on his face, love in the eyes; His was a radiant lotus face, a regal posture and an impressive personality. Immediately, people started to whisper, 'This is none other than the famous Mahatma known as Oriya Baba. Even as I continued my discourse I folded my hands and bowed my head to him and went on to comment on the verse तव कथामृतं त-जीवनम् (Bhag.10-31-9) as follows 'This ambrosial tales of Shri Krishna gives life to those scorched by the heat

of Samsara, washes away the sins of the sinners, removes the sorrows of the sorrowful; it is the life of solace to those suffering from the pangs of separation, a divine topic for those who yearn to become united with the beloved Shyama Sunder.'

At the end of the discourse, I went down the dias and prostrated myself before him with my forehead humbly touching his feat. He cheerfully blessed and congratulated me on my discourse. Then I followed him to his residence in a hut made of grass. There prevailed an atmosphere of Satsanga (a question and answer session on Vedanta) in which the stalwarts, the detached ones, the saints and seekers and all such others were to be seen.

I too put forth a question to His Holiness as follows-- 'Maharaj, who is the one that undergoes rebirth?' At the same time, I was imagining (in anticipation) like this - If His Holiness replies that it is the subtle body (consisting of 17 elements) that undergoes rebirth, and that if the rebirth were not accepted, then the following two logical inconsistencies would arise, such as, the jivas experiencing the unearned fruits, on one side and leaving of the past deeds without experiencing (on the other side) and at the same time Ishvara would appear partial and capricious, then I will retort, 'if the subtle body undergoes rebirth, let it do, how am I, who is unattached and witness of all, affected by it? But my anticipated conversation remained within myself and belied by his calm reply like this---

(1), "Son! don't use your brain to reinforce the rebirth but to sublate it (or grow out of it)". Hearing this unexpected reply I was taken aback. This answer was really unheard of before which was a sign of his compassion and was a revelation to me.

2). Devotion (Bhakti) is not strong without deep faith.

3). Without detachment no progress is possible in understanding the Vedanta.

4). The detachment is adequate only when it includes (or encompasses) the detachment even for divine powers and positions.

5). Thinking of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe too is a distraction, since it is only empirical; and hence not taking it seriously enables one to intuit or understand the absolute truth.

6). The only aim of all discussions in the Vedanta is to give rise to the vision (or intuition) of the absolute truth-and nothing else.

7). The essential nature (swarupa) of God is uncompromising but his (swabhava) disposition (or character) is full of compassion.

8). Jnani (an enlightened one) is always established in the intuitive understanding of Brahman. He never feels that he had removed his ignorance (and came to be what he is). He would have felt so, if the ignorance were really there (at one time)
and was removed later. His understanding is that there was never any ignorance. Sureshvaracharya too corroborates this-

अविद्या सह कार्येण नासीदस्ति भविष्यति ।

Never there was any ignorance, nor is now, nor will ever be possible. (Br.Vartika).

9). Knowledge is only knowledge. It cannot be divided (or classified) into direct or indirect knowledge. This division is only an imagination from the bodily standpoint and hence false.

10). Dividing Mukti (liberation) into jivanmukti (liberation while living) and Videha

Mukti(liberation after death) is incorrect; because it is the self same essential nature of the Atman that is liberation (and not a new state to be attained).
11). By constantly thinking, 'I am limited', the thought of Identification has become entrenched and one started to like it. The liking (for limitation or identification) goes away by practice of discrimination and an outlook of detachment. Eventually, the thought itself is rooted out by the knowledge of the truth.
12). Without withdrawing from the extroverted (active) life and without practice, (मस्ती) the bliss of mystic intoxicatedness (or the constant absorption in spiritual bliss) does not come to a sanyasi.

Such were the new ideas I was blessed to listen in the Satsanga (or meeting) with Baba in Jhusi.

The place was the holiest among the holy places, i.e. Prayaga (Allahabad); the location the most beautiful shore of the Ganga, that too, right in the vicinity of Triveni (confluence of rivers the Ganga, the Yamuna, and the invisible Sarasvati); and the occasion was of holy Ardha-Kumbha; The huge gathering of the pilgrims and saints coinciding the month Magha, (Magha mela) -thus everyone of these was worth seeing. Again, the satsangas of saints belonging to various traditions was a common sight ; there were huts of the detached Avadhootas along the bank of Bhagirathi extending far. But the Satsanga of Odiya Babaji Maharaj was unparallel and wonderful. Varieties of people like the seekers,the wise men, the scholars and the detached ones would approach him and put questions,some very insignificant too. He would answer them smilingly and make the point clear in his short speech.

The occasion was full of a miracle too. The on-going year-long Yajna of Akhanda-Nama-Samkirtana (constant chanting of the Name) convened by Brahmachari Prabhudattaji was coming to and end. The conclusion was to be celebrated. Brahmachariji approached Babaji and submitted to him saying, 'MaharajJi, you have the siddhi (occult power) granted by Devi Annapurna (Goddess of Abundant food). Hence, may you take the provision of food (in this concluding function) into your hands. We have not more than 250/- rupees at our disposaland it needs no saying that 250/- is not enough even for one time's tea. Babaji only laughed in reply (implying acceptance). Then on, Bhandaras were held day after day, as the Goddess Annnapurna made the door of her food-stock wide open. The mother of the universe, Annapurna had really fulfilled her purpose by serving Sadashiva who is the grace embodied right there (i.e. Babaji)

In those days, seekers as well as the faithful devotees and curious visitors used to come from all over India and abroad. One among them was Paul Brunton (the author of 'A Search for Secret India'.) who said, ' 'please show us some miracle'.
Baba replied, 'One drop of water has become this body; yet see how it moves, wanders around, feels and thinks - becomes all this big ; Can there be a greater miracle than this? Isn't it incredible?"

Maharaj would never say 'You are Brahman', nor would he ever say, 'I am Brahman'. If some body asked him 'who are you'?, he would reply, 'the same as what you see'. Sometimes he would say,' I am the servant of the whole world consisting of living and non-living. Yet some other times, ' millions and millions of Brahmas,

Vishnus, and Maheshas flash (sparkle) and disappear like a spark, in my each hair follicle'. If somebody said, ' you are our father or master, or friend '; he would say 'yes' to each of them, for, it was clearly evident that none of these would make any difference to him. Whatever anybody attributes to him, it is all right ; no injunction as to a specific way he should be looked upon , no prohibition as to how he should not be recognized, (in short, he had no self-image). His unreserved and spontaneous smile looked as if expressing the all inclusive universe.

Somebody would quietly take his body to else where; somebody else would sleep with his head resting on his stomach. Some would worship him, some swing him in a cradle. One would call him Krishna, another Rama, yet another Shiva. Neither he urged anyone to say or believe him of something, nor forbade anybody from doing so. People abused him as well as showered praises on him; honoured and worshipped him as well as insulted and despised him. Garlands as well as a chopper (गडासा) were hurled at him. But all this was from others' stand point or the stand point of the ignorant; but from his own stand point there was none of these, (but he only remained the self same immovable and immutable).

If anybody had seen the form of the substrateof the universe, or the self shining Brahman he would have confirmed that it was exactly like our MaharajJi and not at all different from it . All the impositions (अध्यारोप) and removals (अपवाद) were made on him. 'The really real nature of everything is Brahman' - thus keep declaring the great-souls. But our Maharaj was the empirical form of that Brahman.

He was a saint who was the best knower of the Brahman (ब्रह्मविद् वरिष्ठ) for the seekers of knowledge. He was God himself for devotees, but what was he by himself- that I too would not be able to tell.

It was due to the fruit of immence punya of many many past births, or due to the abundant grace of God that I got the opportunity of Satsanga (company), conversation and deep fondness (contact) with him. I made pilgrimages with him, took food and slept with him, and played in his lap for years. His spiritual ecstacy (मस्ती), smile, lion's gait, his roars of Vedanta, spirit of independence - all these picture like impressions are dancing in front of my eyes even now. Even the thought of my having been one among his intimate ones moves my heart and chokes my voice. Whenever I sulked he would pacify me, when I refused to eat, he would feed me. I never garlanded him out of my wish, nor I ever offered even a single flower by way of worship to him, yet I experienced many a times that I mergedwith him and he with me. But he remained all along the same as before. My merging in to him and remaining united with him has been permanent. This has been coming down all along and will will remain for ever. Neither Maya, nor Nature, nor Avidya nor even God, the inner controller of all, can ever break this inseparable relationship of me mine with him. This is unbreakable, eternal and absolute.

His Birth And Childhood

The birth place of MaharajJi was the holy Dham, Jagannatha Puri situated on the mountain, Neelachala which is washed and kissed by the rising waves of the

Eastern sea, whose water appeared like milky foam. When the king Pratapa-rudra was ruling Puri, his family-Guru was Shri Kashi Mishra. This was the time when Shri Chaitanya Maha-Prabhu also incarnated on the earth. Shri Udiya Baba was born in the same family when several generations passed after Shri Kashi Mishra. Being a Royal guru, his family was held in great respect. They were strict followers of orthodox tradition - and a life of rituals prevailed at home. They would not talk to the people educated in English (since such people would move away and despise to a certain degree the traditional culture). They would go out only on palanquin and never ride a bullock cart, would never use footwear, would not take food at the house of other Brahmanas, would not sit on a seat used by others. They had authority over fifty to sixty villages in making a ruling on the matters of Dharma. In short, what I mean to convey by all this is that Udiya Babaji was born in a prestigious family.

At the time of Chaitanya Maha-Prabhu, Kashi Mishra and his successive generations were Vaishnavas, but a few generations later, before Shri Udiya Babaji was born, Upasana of Kali had entered the family. It was said that once his great grandfather was seated and chanting Kali-mantra. In his inadvertence Krishna mantra came to his mouth, and chanted 'Kreem' instead of 'Kleem'. Kali slapped him on his face which turned crooked and remained so throughout his life.

His son was Shri Vasudev Mishra, who had three sons and three daughters. The youngest among them was Shri Vaidyanath Mishra. His son was Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj, whose childhood name was Shri Artatrana Mishra.

He was born in 1932 of Vikram Samvat, on Bhadrapada Krishna Saptami (the 7th day of dark fort-night of the month Bhadrapada). It was monday, at about noon. That was the day of Krishna-Janmashtami for Smartas. The time from the Sunrise was 16-6-30. Lagna or ascendant was Scorpio. The place of the Sun was 4-7. His birth star was the first part of Krittika, which falls in the zodiac sign (Rashi) of (Mesha) Aries.

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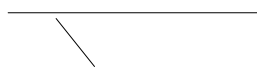

It was his paternal aunt (tayee) who brought him up. He was neither mischievous in temperament, nor was interested in playing. He would endure silently if somebody beat him up; and never nursed thought of revenge. He would feel happy on closing the eyes.

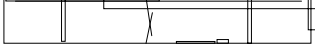
From the age of four to twelve, he learnt to read and write Oriya language, mathematics as well as some knowledge of Samskrit at home. He was weak bodily, and the relatives were not much interested in educating him, but the boy Arthatrana was enthusiastic to study more.

EDUCATION

He set out from home without the knowledge of the people at home and reached

Mayurbhanj through Baleshvar. He was accompanied by another student. Taking such a brave step in such a young age only proves his natural love for freedom and detachment. A teacher by name Padmanabhacharya working in the Samskrit school in Mayurbhanj knew his father and hence admitted him straight-away. But Artatrana was worried that if this teacher had informed his parents about him, the latter (they) might take him back home. Therefore, he left the school without informing anybody for another place Balya-beda, where he studied Samskrit for five years and passed Kavya-teerth, a Samskrit course.

During the days of preparation for the examination, one of his co-students Gangadhar Mishra passed away suddenly due to cholera. Arthatrana was a close friend of him and therefore felt disturbed with his death. With this a foundation of detachment or dispassion was laid there; then on, the entire world was looking transitory and joyless (unattractive) for him.

Meanwhile, Raja Krishnachandra, a Vaishnava invited a music-party of children from Kolkata to Gopinath Mandir, on an occasion of its festival. This party had played many beautiful dramas. One of the boys played the character of Lord Siva so beautifully that Arthatrana was deeply impressed with it. He saw Lord Siva sitting motionless in siddhasana, and felt inspired to remain in Samadhi like him. The divine sports of Bhagawan Sri Krishna such as, grazing the cows and taking food in a natural surroundings of a forest (वनभोजनम्) left such a deep impression on his mind that when he went to his room he was absorbed so much in those thoughts that he entered in to trance of divine love (भावसमाधि) This trance of divine love lasted for three days. Finding him absorbed in such a divine sentiment of love without taking food, his co-students thought he must be under the spell of a disease. But they did not know that it was not a disease, but a sure remedy for the disease of samsara.

SOCIAL SERVICE OR DISPASSION

After completing education, Arthatranaji returned home. Parents assigned him the hereditary profession of being an Acharya. While discharging the duties, his mind was always feeling a pull towards devotion, dispassion, and yoga. That was the time Orissa came under the grip of a severe famine. Owing to starvation people were dying like insects. People were, for want of food, eating the mud mixing in water or butter milk; some even ate the poison and breathed their last. Arthatrana, being Arthatrana (i.e. protector of those in distress) true to his name plunged in to the service. But when he found that in spite of his serious efforts, he could not affect any remarkable improvement in the situation, he felt deeply saddened.

What can be done to appease the hunger of the hungry? -thinking again and again over this, an idea struck him- Why not I get a bowl like that of Draupadi, which supplies food unceasingly and with which I could go on feeding the people. Thinking that such a bowl can be obtained by praying or meditating on God, he left home on 5th day of Chaitra month, of 1951 Vikram Samvat (era), just with a water vessel and 11 rupees in hand. Intending to pray to Jagadjanani (the mother of the universe) in order to obtain such a bowl of unexhausting food (अक्षयपात्रं) he took to the road of Kamakshi

Devi at Kamarupa (in Assam).

He went from Puri to Kolkata, to Go-aland ; from there to Gauhati. Reaching the province (क्षेत्र) of Kamakshi Devi, Arthatrana became joyous. One Bengali of Silhat made all provisions necessary for his religious practice. He started there the practice of Nava Durga according to the scripturally enjoined manner.

The practice was going on well. He had also darshan (vision) of Devi in dream. While living there he had an occasion to listen to discourse on 'Viveka chudamani' by a saint. Inspired by such a discourse on Vedanta his mind changed and started to question the worth of his plan like this- What will I gain even if Devi grants me, as I wished, a bowl like the one that Draupadi was in possession of? How many people will be able to come to me to receive the food? How long am I, for that matter, going to live? Am I going to live eternally? Besides, will all the problems of people be solved by finding food alone?

Arthatranaji felt that it was not right to continue the practice with such a limited motive. On the contrary he should pray and meditate on Jagadamba, by giving up all the wishes. He discontinued or dropped the practice and went to Kashi. He had darshan of Mata Annapurna and Lord Visvanatha and paying a visit on the way to Vaidyanath Dham, he came back home.

As a result of this (upasana) practice, devotion to Goddess and dispassion (to the world) were growing in his mind, day by day. In the meantime, his loving aunt, (ताई) whose love brought him home whenever he went away from home, expired. Since this bondage too was broken he became pleased. His parents were (in the beginning) enthusiastic to bind him to a married life but they dropped this idea, when they learnt from an astrologer that he would not live longer than 32 years. This pleased him more.

Brahmacharya And Search For A Siddha (An Accomplished) Guru

Arthatranaji came away to Jagannatha Puri and persuaded Swami Shri Madhusudan Teerth who was Jagadguru and Shankaracharya of Govardhana Peetham at Puri and took initiation in to the life-long (नैष्ठिक) Brahmacharya. Then he was given a new name, Brahmachari Vasudeva Swarup. His father and Uncle felt sad, but what could they do to prevent it ? Jagadguru replied, 'If I had not initiated him he would have taken the Deeksha from somebody else. You will have one advantage that he remains with me only, and not at an unknown place. This was the consideration when I initiated him.'

Now Brahmachari Vasudev Swarup was on searching spree for an accomplished (siddha) Guru. He searched out the entire India from Kashi to Rameshvar. During this expedition, he experienced many things. Somebody suggested him to eat purified (संखिया) arsenic along with ghee and sugar to become ऊर्ध्वरेता i.e. to maintain perfect Brahmacharya and somebody else suggested something else. Somebody even started preparing a herb to that effect, for sake of him. Then he thought, 'if I consume/take some herb and show some miracle to people, the interest in prestige and popularity will grow. Prestige and pride will only plunge a person in the maya (temptation or enslavement) and of what benefit (use) is it to me?

In a place in Go-aland, he was surrounded by young girls. Then he prostrated himself before them and said, 'O Mothers! Please leave me alone and show me the way to the market'. Moved by his sincere feeling of motherliness towards them, their attitude too changed and gave him the way with reverence. Once again, he met an accomplished yogi on the mountain of Guru, and asked him for a mantra and also a method of Japa to attain siddhi. The yogi said, "I shall impart this mantra (by way of) as a dowry to a person who is willing to marry my daughter. If you are ready for it, you will get the mantra from me". (He rejected it and left the place.)

Then he had a darshan of Jagadamba at Kamaksha Temple and reached Badpeta. He had darshan of Kaliyakant, and stayed there to begin his sadhana. The mother of Manipur King came to know about him and earnestly requested him to pay a visit to her palace. Then she called her son who became dispassionate to the worldly life, to meet him, hoping that he would be persuaded by Brahmachariji. When he broached affairs of ruling the kingdom, the prince replied, 'MaharajJi, this worldly-life is like a python sitting with its mouth open, and ready to bite all of us with its teeth of likes and dislikes. I, for one,would never like to fall in to such affairs of likes and dislikes.

Brahmachari Vasudeva Swarup was only a young man then of 22years. The aged Mahant (head) of Shiva-Mandir in Badpeta, where he was living, was seriously ill and his disciple, was away on his pilgrimage to Rameshvar. As he was helpless and badly in need of a nurse, Vasudev Swarup offered himself to be one / undertook it. The Mahant, (head of the Mandir) was highly pleased with his loving service and called the trustees of the Mandir and told them, this Brahmachari will be successor of my seat. So you make sure that he will become the Mahant'.

After ten days, the Mahant left his mortal body. In keeping with his order, Brahmachari Vasudeva Swarup was installed on the position of Mahant, but he, without yielding to the Maya, (the snare) engaged himself in japa, practice and prayer as ever before. He completed practicing Shata-chandi. As a result he got Vak-siddhi, i.e. power of his speech proving to be true, and telepathy, reading other's mind.

This power of reading other's mind was greatly disturbing him, because he was seeing clearly the evil in the mind of whoever comes to him. He was fed up with this power only in eighteen days and prayed to the Mother Goddess to relieve him of this power. He was freed from it by the Mother's grace.

On returning from his pilgrimage to Rameshvar, the Mahant's disciple started claiming his right to occupy the seat. Brahmachari Vasudev Swarup too defended his claim to be just and recommended him for the position, saying that he was not fond of / would not like to continue in the seat. But the trustees were not willing to lose him. One day, he left Badpeta town for good, without informing anybody.

Again, MaharajJi engaged himself in search of Siddha yogis. He searched a lot in Assam and Bhutan for Hatha Yogis. He was looking for a yogi who had accomplished Nirvikalpa Samadhi,. Once he met a Hatha Yogi who guided him to practice Asanas, Tratak (gazing), meditation, concentration and so on. He got even Samadhi (trance) too. Ultimately he came to know that the Hatha yogi who taught him, himself could not reach the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Once he saw a house was on fire in a village in Baleshvar. All the members of

the house came running out except their daughter-in-law. All were worried about her and screaming and calling out for help, but nobody dared to enter the house in a blazing fire to rescue (fetch) her. Finding the situation pitiable, he rushed in to the leaping flames and brought the girl holding her by hand. Though he touched her only to save her life, he felt that touching a woman (even with good intention) was not in keeping with the vow of Brahmacharya. Hence he atoned for it by fasting for 3 days and nights.

He stayed in Rameshvar Dham for ten days in search of a Siddha (an accomplished one). With the same hope, he visited Pandharpur, Poona, Mumbai, and reached Haridwar and Rishikesh, but he could find no such siddha whom he wanted. After such a long pilgrimage he returned to Govardhana Math.

Sanyasa

Since the astrologers predicted a short life span for him, he thought, 'one knows not when the body will fall off, hence it is proper to take sanyasa' (formal initiation in to a life of monkhood. Or renunciate). He appealed to the Acharya of Govardhana Math, for the same, who happily agreed to it. At the age of 32, in 1964 of Vikram. E. he was initiated into Sanyasa. Then the yogapatta (name) given to him was Swami Purnananda Teertha; since he was also carrying a staff, he was called Dandi Swami Purnananda Teertha. But he became well known only as Udiya Babaji (Udiya means one who hails from Orissa. Baba means a Sadhu) or Shri MaharajJi. The Acharya wished that he would succeed to the headship of the Govardhana Peetham, but the power and prestige of it never had any attraction for him, so he did not accept it and went away. As he was moving around he surrendered danda (staff) and a Kamandalu (a water vessel born of a tree used by sanyasis) to the ocean, because he thought, 'when I have given up everything by way of renunciation why retain even these two (danda and Kamandalu) which only imply the show (ostentation) of sanyasa'.

He went from Puri to Raniganj, next to Vaidyanath Dham, from where he wanted to go to Kashi. Some Brahmachari suggested him to take a train as it is too far to cover the distance by walking. Accepting his suggestion he set out towards railway station.

Just at the time, the Brahmachari gave him a cool drink mixed with Bhang (an intoxicating drug). He was not aware of it; but it put him to such a deep sleep in the train, that he did not wake up at the time when he had to change the train. So, remaining in the same train, he reached Chapra instead of Kashi. The ticket collector at the gate was terribly angry, and shouted, 'you do not know whether the train goes to Chapra or Kashi, and you call yourself a Sadhu'. The ticket collector's comment hurt him badly. He came out of the station, stright away to the Ganga and taking water in to his hand, made a samkalpa (determination) swearing, 'hereafter I shall never travel by any Vehicle'.

Since then, Maharaj started his pada-yatra, travel on foot. He left Chapra for Kashi; and walking along the Ganga he reached Gazipur. He does not beg for food, but lived on Ayachita Vritti, i.e. taking whatever food comes his away unasked.

One day, he got a fruit that was very bitter. When he ate it, as he was very

hungry, he picked up cholera. He became weak due to loose motions and vomiting, and then went into coma. He was lying near the place where the dead bodies, that were thrown into Ganga without samskara, came after floating for some distance and got accumulated. When some people, who came to do samskara to one of the bodies, hearing the moans from his body approached him and found that he was still breathing and not a dead body. They washed his clothes, cleaned his body with water and laid him under a near by Banyan tree. They fed him with curd but he could not digest even that and vomited it out. He spent the whole night in a semi-conscious state. At the sunrise in the next morning he felt that a new life appeared in him. Finding a residence of an Udaseen Baba near by, he went to have his darshan, who give him some curd and Khichdi to eat.

Then he found his way to an ashram of a Paramahamsa. The latter told him, 'This is a strange place and strange language for you; Besides, you are not familiar with the food, customs and behavior of the people of this province. So it is very difficult for you to live on food unasked. Therefore it is better for you to take to Madhukari Vritti, i.e. begging from house to house'. He accepted his advice, because he also found a justification for it i.e. one will get to learn to endure honour and insult, polite and harsh words, hunger and thirst etc. The strength of endurance as well as penance will improve with it and the dispensation of the maker and manager of the world can be experienced at first hand.

He started walking on the left side of the river beyond Saidpur. He came across a place of a Southern Swami near Rajwadi station. The Mahant*, who was a south Indian was bed-ridden due to illness. Finding him helpless, he started serving him. As his health was further deteriorating, the Managing Committee of the ashram decided to make MaharajJi as its Mahant. With the permission of ailing Swamiji he was installed formally on the position. People were highly pleased with his conduct (behavior), worship, and other sadhanas. People were filled with great enthusiasm and joy when he introduced decoration of Lord Shiva as a part of worship. Rudrabhisheka* and Samkirtana* etc. on Ekadashi* day. At the same time, the health of the southern Swami was gradually improving. When he came to know of Ekadashi-celebration and certain other novel ways introduced in the management, he got upset. Once, MaharajJi, who was the Mahant sent a word to him such as, 'some saints have come to this town and I wish to go and see them'. The Southern Swami sent a reply, saying, 'there is dignity and a protocol for the Mahant, which says, you should not go to others; instead, whoever wants to see you should come to you'.

MaharajJi (who as sanyasi did not like the pride and protocols that go with the position of a Mahant) did not relish this restriction warranted by the protocol. The very night he left the place without anybody's knowledge for Kashi. When the magnificence of a position as big as Govardhana Peetham could not entice him, how can a position of Mahant of a small ashram ever entrap him?

Dawn Of Wisdom

In these days the desire to know the truth was very intense in the mind of MaharajJi. The place and language were strange. He was neither accustomed to eat

roti nor could he digest it. Hence he was growing lean and weak day by day. Having had darshan of God Vishvanatha and Annapurna in Kashi he was spending the days on the bank of Ganga. On the insistence (pressing request) of a certain Mahatma, he spent one Chatur-Masya*(a retreat for a period of a four months) in an ashram on the Ganga bank seven miles away from Kashi. There were many other sadhus too in the place who were engaged in Vedantic contemplation. The discussions on the Gita, Brahmasutras and Upanishads were (the hot topics) taking place among them. But MaharajJi was not keenly interested in them, because the interest in self-enquiry has grown very intense in him. He had no peace of mind.

Day and night his thoughts were occupied with the questions such as 'Who am I? Who made this Universe? What is this world? What is the reality?' And so on. Some people advised him to study the Prasthana-trayi*, to find answers to his questions, but even with all that, he was not able to make any head way. After a lot of wandering he reached Prayaga (Allahabad). MaharajJi would describe his state of mind at that time as follows "Then my condition was like that of a mad dog. Caring for none; Just dismiss (outright) any thing and any body . Restless and nothing but restless. Faith in anything had come to naught".

That was the time of hard sadhana, the final stage of culmination of dispassion. I would go on travelling on foot. Whenever felt like halting, I would throw myself under a tree, eat if I get something, otherwise go hungry. allowed cyclones, torrential rains -- all these to pass over me.

One day the restlessness had worsened and life was appearing burdensome. Then I asked myself, 'Of what purpose is this life, when I did not get the intuition of the truth? Death is better than such life'.

Throwing away his only companion the pot of bottle gourd into the waters of Ganga, MaharajJi too was about to follow it, i.e. jump in to it; then he heard a voice of the inner controller God Shiva, saying, 'Wait! What do you gain by dying? It is possible that the moon of self-contemplation may rise, and the compassionate look of Him may possibly fall on the distressed Jiva too?

Dissuaded thus by his inner voice, he desisted from sacrificing his life to Bhagirathi, yet the deep restlessness had not left (vacated) his heart. He entered a Shiva Temple near by, and stayed there. Faith, belief and hope of divine being - everything vanished completely from him. He lied down with his feet placing on Shiva Lingam.

But God Ashutosh (Shiva) was true to his name, and quickly melted out of pity. As the result he instantly slipped into meditation where he saw in his vision two Paramahamsa sanyasis standing right in front of him, one looked like God Shiva and another like Rishi Vasishtha. Two divine figures of brown colour smeared with ashes (on arms, hands and chest) त्रिपुण्ड्र - three horizontal lines of ashes on the forehead, and rudraksha.

Swamiji made obeisance and submitted his questions to them. The answers followed immediately, each answer was more solid than the other making the points at once as clear as day. All his doubts were cleared one by one. They told him these two verses to remember.

नेति नेतीति नेतीति शेषितं यत्परं पदं ।
निराकर्तुमशक्यत्वात् तदस्मीति सुखीभव ।।
जडतां वर्जयित्वैतां शिलाया हृदयं च यत् ।
अमनस्कं महाबाहो तन्मयो भव सर्वदा ।।

Negate gross, subtle and the causal world, by saying (thrice) not this, not this, not this, and what cannot be negated remains as the परमपद - the absolute truth, know it as 'I am That', and be happy.

When you give up this inertness (of ignorance), there remains the mindless state of the heart hardened like stone, be always identified and united with that (consciousness).

What a nectarine answer.

उसे खोजते मीर खोये गये ।
कोयी देखे इस जुस्तजू की तरफ ।।

While searching, the priest lost himself,
Loot at it what a search it is

MaharajJi is fulfilled. His restlessness was gone, and felt peace. The hearty river of knowledge and wisdom started flowing. Analyzing it, Babaji would say, the fruit of (वैराग्यम्) dispassion is knowledge, the fruit of knowledge is erased passion (उपरति). The only difference is - when one gets dispassion one does not enjoy (pleasures) out of guilt, but on finding uparati (erased passion) there is no tendency to enjoy a thing even if one sees it right in front. The result of उपरति (erased passion) is happiness whose fruit is peace (limitless fathomless or all round and endless peace)

Now A Desire For The Experience
Or
To Be One With It

His जिज्ञासा, desire to know, was satisfied, but the intense longing to be united with (immersed in) it arose in him; a thirst for drinking endless sweet syrup and a yearning to merge into the limitlessness. The juice of love had become the sap of life and flowing in each capillary of him.

MaharajJi was once walking towards Kanpur right along the bank of Ganga. At one place he was caught in a boggy area (bogland). The more he tried to pull himself out, the more he was sinking in it. He thought the end of life has approached. Then he became effortlessly established in the nature of Atman and as result of it, there remained no more thought of life or death. His state was like what is described as नाभिनन्दति मरणम् नाभिनन्दति जीवनम् meaning- he wishes (commends) neither life nor death. Right just at that time, some people came running and threw a cloth at him, asking him to hold one end of it. When he held it, people holding the other end pulled him out of the bogland.

He reached Bithoor via Kanpur. Having had darshan of Swami Jnanashram there, he reached Barua-Ghat and stayed there for some time. Since the Swami was an adept in Pranayama, in order to learn some from him he stayed there (waiting) for many months. When he started practicing it with the onset of the winter, Goddess Jagadamba had appeared to him in dream and instructed him saying, 'This method is not (suitable) for you. It is only the Raja Yoga which you have been practicing, that is proper for you. You do not need to alter it (and take to something else)'.

He stayed there for an year and then proceeded towards the upper side of Ganga bank until he reached a Bargadiya Baba who had been living under a banyan tree for 30 years. Holding satsangas with many saints, he went to Farrukhabad and there after reached Dhaiyi Ghat crossing the Ganga. There he had Satsanga of Atmananda Swami and crossed back the Ganga and started proceeding up stream along the Ganga.

That was a night time, and the month of आषाढ - i.e. june. He walked a long distance of many miles and found no sign of any village. No human being was seen moving around the place. He was also hungry but there was no way of getting any food. Hence, MaharajJi sat under an Ashoka tree in siddhasana.

After a while the moon had risen in the sky. Just at the same time, two handsome boys appeared from nowhere laughing and chatting, and asked him, 'Baba! Would you like to have some roti? Swamiji said, "Yes boys! But where is your house? And what is your caste?"

The boys answered with a smile, 'Baba! We live in the village near by and we are Shaiva Bania (a Business community) by caste?

Baba asked "Oh boy! Why are you wandering alone in such a late night?" They replied, "Just like that. While (by way of) playing and playing we happened to come here."

Until then, MaharajJi had been taking bhiksha only from Brahmanas. But now, boys had touched his heart so much that he accepted it from them. The fetters of dos and don't (pertaining to the ritual purity of food) did break away with this.

Those boys brought, in a short while, roti and curry of plantains. As he was taking the food, the boys went on playing. After he finished, they asked, 'Baba! Shall we take leave?'

Swamiji said, 'OK boys! you can go'.

As MaharajJi slept for some time and woke up early in the morning before dawn, those boys appeared again. They approached addressing him lovingly, 'Baba'. MaharajJi asked,' Boys! It is not even dawn yet, how could you come here?'

They replied, 'Baba, we simply came out for playing. By the way, tell us would you like to drink something?'

As soon as MaharajJi said yes, they brought buttermilk in a mud pot and filled MaharajJi's vessel of bottle gourd (ताम्बू) and left the place.

After the Sun rise, MaharajJi searched in all directions for a long distance and did not find any village at all. On the way, when he broached this event to a Mahatma, the latter explained, 'This is the divine play of God Vishvanatha.'

MaharajJi was convinced that -

खुदा खानाबदोशों की करे खुद कारसामानी ।
नयी मंजिल नया बिस्तर नया दाना नया पानी ।।

God himself makes arrangements for the wandering beggars (खानाबदोश) and provides each day a new place, new bed, different food and different water.

Swinging out of his ecstatic spiritual intoxication, MaharajJi proceeded. He would always go singing- (हरि आशिक का मग न्यारा है) - the way of Hari's lover is something different/peculiar/unique. The lines of this song would spring from his lotus-mouth and spread in to the air around-

जिन खान पान नहि भावे है, नहि कोमल वसन सुहावै है ।
सब विषयभोग नित खारा है, हरि आशिक का मग न्यारा है ।।

Neither the food and nor the water interest him,
Nor the soft clothes do (please him),
All the objects of pleasures are always bitter
Thus, the way (life) of the lover of Hari is unique.

तिन सबसे नाता तोडा है, विष विषयों से मन मोडा है
इक अपना प्रिय उर धारा है, हरि आशिक का मग न्यारा है ।।

He broke his relationship with all
Turned away from the prison of sense objects
But, keeps only his beloved in the heart
Thus the way of the lover of Hari is unique.

जग जो जो वस्तु देखे है, सब सत्य न करके फेंके है ।
तिन जगसों किया किनारा है, हरि आशिक का मग न्यारा है ।।

What ever thing he sees in the world
All that he threw as not real.
Thus he set aside all the three worlds.
Thus, the way of the lover of Hari is unique.

नहि श्रुति के किंकर होते हैं, मन वाक् अगोचर जो वे हैं ।
तिन विधि निषेध को जारा है, हरि आशिक का मग न्यारा है ।।

That he is no more a slave of the Vedic injunctions
Since he is not accessible to words and mind
Hence he burnt out the dos and don'ts.
Thus the way of the lover of Hari is unique.

जैसा तनु चले चलाते हैं, जब हरि देवे तब खाते हैं ।
तिन के संग फिरता प्यारा है, हरि आशिक का मग न्यारा है ।।

He goes wherever the body takes him
He eats only when Hari (God) gives him food.
The beloved (Hari) moves always in his company,
Thus the way of the lover of Hari is unique.

जो प्रेम पियाला पीते हैं, प्रिय सहित सभी जग जीते हैं ।
कुछ करना नहीं पियारा है, हरि आशिक का मग न्यारा है ।।

One who drinks only the cup of (Divine) love
Wins over the entire world along with the beloved
Never thinks of doing any thing
Thus the way of the lover of Hari is unique.

Revelling In Spiritually Ecstatic (Mystic) Bliss.

One Brahmachari, Motiram was running a Samskrit school in a fort of Rampur. MaharajJi has accepted to spend the Chatur-masya there (four months of rainy season) and on his insistence, taught, out of love, the students later on. But extended his stay there for two years due to the humble insistence of the villagers. Living for some days in Sahavajpur of Eta district, he enjoyed himself, staying at Mohanpur also. There he was greatly in love with the villagers, who thought that he would permanently settle down with them, but रमता जोगी, बहता पानी, इनको कौन सके ठहराय? Who can hold these two in one place- A yogi who is happy by himself and the water flowing.

MaharajJi's pilgrimage, Satsanga, reflection, contemplation and sadhana continued like this for years. In course of his pilgrimage of this kind, he reached Ramghat on the bank of the Ganga. From the town Anoop to Ramghat he lived mostly on the bank of Ganga only. He reveled in his spiritual ecstasy mainly in Ramghat and Karnavas. He lived around ten years immersed in intense sadhana.

Immersed in happiness Maharaj reached Ramghat for the first time in 1972 of Vikram era in Ashadha (i.e. june-july). The feeling of liking, detachment, disinterest, love, dispassion, and endurance were dancing on his lotus like face. Seeing the beautiful forest of Ramghat area the enchanting scenery of Ganga bank, and the wonderful brilliance of the Goddess earth, have fascinated him. Having had darshan of God Mahadeva (Shiva), Swamiji made his seat in Imtivali Kuti (a hut of Tamarind).

He had experienced very clearly sam-prajnata Samadhi and a-sam-prjnata-samadhi. Day and night, he used to be immersed in the ecstasy of Samadhi. He was in ecstatic bliss all the 24 hours.

While enjoying the bliss of love in Imtivali Kuti, he was practising many vows like Chandrayana and others. Like Bhagwan Buddha he engaged himself in severe penance. He was immersed in the ocean of Absolute consciousness and happiness, and remaining in his mystic ecstatic (intoxication), he would some times burst in to singing like this-

१. तदा नैव बालो युवा भोगलोलः, तदा नैव वृद्धः समासन्नकालः ।
न वा साधुशीलोऽप्यथाऽसाधुशीलः, चिदानन्दसिन्धौ यदाहं निमग्नः ।।

When I am immersed in the ocean of Absolute consciousness and happiness, (then) I am neither a child, nor a youngster fond of pleasures, nor an old man approaching the end, at the same time, I am neither good in character nor otherwise.

२. तदा नैव बद्धो, न मुक्तो, न रागी, विरागी, न संगी, तथा नो वियोगी ।
न योगी, न भोगी न संसाररोगी, चिदानन्दसिन्धौ यदाहं निमग्नः ।।

When I am immersed in the ocean of happiness belonging to Absolute Consciousness, I am neither bound, nor liberated, neither passionate nor dispassionate, neither attached nor detached, neither a self controlled one nor indulgent in worldly life, nor afflicted by the disease of samsara.

३. तदा नैव जाग्रत् सुषुप्तिर् न चास्ति, न वा स्वप्न एषा तुरीया न काचित् ।
न हि चोन्मनी नो गता यातनाम्नी, चिदानन्दसिन्धौ यदाहं निमग्नः ।।

When I am immersed in the ocean of happiness belonging to the Absolute consciousness, there is neither waking, nor dream nor deep sleep, nor is such a thing called Turiya (fourth).......

४. तदा नासनं, प्राणरोधो, निरोधो, न वा धारणा नो न वा ध्यानमेकम् ।
तदा कारकाणां समाधिर्न कश्चित्, चिदानन्दसिन्धौ यदाहं निमग्नः ।।

When I am immersed in the ocean of happiness belonging to the Absolute Consciousness, there is neither asana (bodily posture) nor Pranayama, nor the control of senses, nor concentration, nor meditation nor the Samadhi i.e. the dissolution of subject, object and their relationship.

५. तदा नाप्यभेदो न भेदो न बोधो, न चाबोध एष विनोदो न खेदः
अहो न मुकुन्दो न चानन्दकन्दो, चिदानन्दसिन्धौ यदाहं निमग्नः ।।

When I am immersed in the ocean of happiness pertaining to the Absolute Consciousness, there is neither non-duality, nor duality, neither knowledge nor ignorance, neither joy nor sorrow, neither qualified Brahman nor unqualified Brahman.

What can be said of this all absorbing mystic intoxication of the ocean of Happiness? How can one describe this state of यथाऽवस्थितोऽहं तथैवास्मि सिद्धः meaning I am an accomplished one (siddha) by being what I am (and not having become on).

These days MaharajJi would always remain seated in siddhasana and would not lie down even during night. Whenever he felt tired, he would bend forward and rest on his elbows for a while. For years he had his rest only like this.

It was his rule or vow to remain aloof from women. His belief was, वर्जयित्वा स्त्रियः सङ्गं कुर्यादभ्यासं समादरात् । meaning, avoiding any interaction with women, one should

sincerely engage in spiritual practice. He swore that if any woman comes in to his sight he would leave the place.

He would remain so much absorbed in Samadhi that the worldly consciousness even for a second, would make him uncomfortable. He would feel heavy (burdensome) even taking a morsel of food and put it in mouth. He would take very long time even to wink once. He had already stopped taking food, and would follow the vows (of fasting etc.) most of the time. Severe practices of such type proceeded for a long time. Keeping himself away from the hub bub of people he continued his practice. For this purpose, he had to change his residence many a times.

The character of Brahma-nishtha (i.e. established in Brahman) who is a dispassionate saint and an enlightened renunciate, were to be seen in him as described in the Vedas-like this-

शान्ता दान्ता उपरतः तितिक्षवः समाहितः
आत्मरतयः आत्मक्रीडः आत्ममिथुनाः आत्मानन्दाः
प्रणवमेव परं ब्रह्मं आत्मप्रकाशं शून्यं जानन्तः
तत्रैव परिसमाप्ताः ।।

(The enlightened) have mind and senses under control, are relieved of desires, enduring, one-pointed,
Reveling in oneself, playing in oneself,
Joined with oneself, enjoying himself,
Knowing the Omkara which is the Absolute Brahman,
Self-shining, and free from the world of duality
They culminate themselves there.

निर्विकल्पसमाधिना स्वतन्त्रो यतिश्चरति
स सन्यासी स मुक्तः स पूज्यः स योगी परमहंसः सोऽवधूतः स ब्राह्मणः इति ।।

A renunciate moves about freely in his thought-free Samadhi. He is a true sanyasi a renunciate, he is liberated, he is adorable, He is called a yogi, a Paramahamsa an avadhoota, a Brahmana, or whatever.

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TRANSFORM A DACOIT

The fragrance of MaharajJi's sadhana was spreading all around. Being attracted by it people were flocking to him. Devotees of all kinds were in queue to see him. There were good as well as bad among them, some were robbers too. Somebody would worship him with all the ingredients of worship like incense (धूप), lamp, (दीप), food (नैवेद्य) and some body else would offer (नागाञ्जलि) hands folded like the hood of cobra.

Once, a lion came there. Seeing that people were frightened. MaharajJi said, it is not something to be dreaded. He comes here generally for (darshan) seeing

Goddess Chamunda. He will go away after seeing'. He did go away.

One summer, a leader of dacoits came to see him. A reward of thousand rupees was announced on his head. (for his capture) he left his rifle at a distance, resting it against a tree and came to bow down to Swamiji. On being asked about him self he said openly, 'MaharajJi, I am going for a plunder.

MaharajJi said, 'Will you do one thing, if I advise you?

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'What is that, Maharaj -?

'You should not touch women.'

o.k. Maharaj. I promise that I will not touch women.

He raided the house of a land-lord, and was carrying the property looted from him. After walking away for 2.5 k.m. he found that other members of his gang carrying a cot with a young woman still (sleeping) on it. He immediately shouted angrily, 'Why have you brought this? Now, you must return her to the family.'

The other member said, 'If we go back, we will all be killed. The assembled villagers will finish us up'.

"Come on, I shall accompany you".

They returned her untouched. When the gang returned to their camp (अड्डा) he was disturbed and regretted, "What a wretched life of ours. While the people are trembling, crying, and screaming, we loot their ornaments from their person. And our co-looters molest their women".

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He was full of guilt. Then his heart changed and he abstained from the life of dacoity for good. He abolished the gang and became a traveler of honest good path. Like this, there were many robbers, who being inspired by him, left behind the life of decoity and took to the path of honesty.

MEETING SHRI HARI BABA

There were many Brahmanas / scholars of Naravar who heard, "Shri, Udiya Baba arrived at Ramghat who bears all the characters of a sanyasi in full", and came to see him. The teachers and students of a Vedic college (of that place) started coming to him and getting benefitted by his Satsanga.

In 1915, MaharajJi went to karnavas from Naravar. He started living in midst of trees and doing sadhana. A cave and a hut was built for him. After spending some time there, he reached Bhrgu-Kshetra near North Bhedia which is five miles away. When MaharajJi reached Bhrgu-kshetra from eastern side, on the same day Shri Hari baba reached the place coming from west. The meeting of those two Mahatmas looked like the two October moons (शरच्चन्द्र) coming to

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hug each other. This meeting of them was full of love and hearty, which only increased as the time passed. (passage of time)

When MaharajJi visited Ramghat, in the same year, he wandered along the bank of Ganga as far as Laxman-Jhoola (a swinging bridge on the Ganga at Rishikesh). During his journey from Anupshahar to laxman-Jhoola, he gave Satsanga to many saints, mahatmas, seekers and the learned scholars. At every place thousands of people were benefitted from his Satsanga. Shri MaharajJi would say, 'the entire belt from Kashi to Laxman-jhoola has become my home'.

It was पौष्य month (i.e. January) in 1922.

Pujya (Revered) Hari Baba while wandering reached the village. Ganga's bed extends close to the village. When she is in floods (every year), the whole area is under water. Once there was such an overwhelming flood, and one big stream of Gangaji gushed went and joined Maheba river inundating on the way as many as 700 villages situated in an area of 40 miles. The villagers were pitiably screaming for help. Seeing their miserable condition Hari Baba's tender heart moved and was pained, and he made up his mind to build a barrage.

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One day Hari Baba went to some of his devotees and said- 'I have decided to build a barriage over Gangaji and this work should begin right today. Every piece of work should be done, (while) chanting the name of God. It is the highest duty of all to join the service with body, mind and wealth taking the barrage to be nothing but a visible form of god.

Owing to the inspiration of such a saint, the construction of barriage began immediately. The auspicious beginning was done with chanting of 'Shri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Jaya Rama'.

Hari Baba would ring the bell and keep singing the name of God. He went on telling the people, 'This barrage is none else than the indwelling Bhagwan himself. Nobody can hide his hypocrisy, and evil from this Omniscient one. Whatever is the wish of any devotes will be fulfilled in participating in its construction. All the crisis will blow away if one lays some mud on the barriage (by way of service).

Construction of barriage was going with a jet speed, like even the bridge (सेतु) of Shri Bhagwan Rama. Hari Baba would seek donation in Hindu villages singing 'Shri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Jaya Rama' and in muslim villages saying 'I am purely (or truly of your breed/caste). Certain rich (Hindu) businessmen

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belonging to Khurja and Ujhiyani were ready to bear the entire expenses by themselves, but Baba had refused it; for, he wanted that (honesty) and hard earned, holy money of God in the form of masses (जनता जनार्दन) should go in to it, and this holy work should stand on the foundation of holy labour. (i.e. voluntary and devotional service).

The work was completed on the day of Shri Rama Navami, as he wished. The

huge noise of chanting of Hari-Nama was reverberating and shaking the sky.

Shri MaharajJi met Pujya Haria baba once before in Bhrgu-Kshetra. Again they met here on Hari-barriage. The Ganga shore had become a shore of living, wide awakened devotees made with the ecstasy of spiritual happiness. It is said in Hindi that खूब गुजरेगी जो मिल बैठेंगे दीवाने दो. It is very good time when two madmen (of God) meet.

There was a wonderful love between each other. Both would take care of each other well. As the bell rings, Shri MaharajJi would say, 'Come on, let us go; Hari baba has arrived for Kirtan, and himself would stand up and set out. Hari baba said, 'In beginning, when I made people to do Samkirtana in the villages around, all the saints

residing on the Ganga-bank objected to it. It was Udiya Baba alone who supported the Samkirtana sincerely and whole-heartedly. Not only this, he himself propagated Samkirtana among the people throughout his life. If he were not to do it, Samkirtana would have disappeared from the society long before. (Nobody has loved any body in the world so much as Udiya Baba did love me.)

MaharajJi would be worshipped on the barriage every year on Shivaratri day. He would certainly be present there on the occasion only to please Hari Baba. MaharajJi had love for many other saints, and hence he would go on and off, on their humble insistence to those various places like here.

MaharajJi'S LIFE IN BRINDAVAN AND TEACHING

Brindavan was Vaikuntha for him. He would often say, 'Let us go to Brindavan and take a small piece of land in a corner (from Bhagwan Brindavan Bihariji (i.e. Krishna) to build an ashram and stay there. The attraction he felt for the abode of delighting Leela of Bhagwan Krishna had drawn him to the place. In 1994 of Vikram era, his Shri Krishna ashram was established in brindavan. It's foundation stone was laid by highly mystically ecstatic Gvariya Baba. Since then, nectarine bliss began showering in the ashram, and the sweetness of Brindavan

started blossoming. After the founding of Shri Krishna ashram MaharajJi would more often stay-there only.

The stream of Satsanga would continuously flow from 3 a.m. to 11.p.m. everyday. How the sanctity and dignity of Rasaleela is maintained in this ashram, - is (remembered)even to this day. The provision has been made for both the methods of Upasana of formless God and God with form. MaharajJi would be personally present in all the programmes. Even his close devotees also could not understand what he really was. Whether a Shaiva or a Shakta? Or a worshipper of Rama or Krishna? Or a Vedantin or Upasaka?

During the discussion on Brahman, one could experience that he was an embodiment of knowledge established in Brahman. During the Samkirtana he would be immersed in mystic ecstasy (Samadhi) of love (भावसमाधि). When he is present in Rasaleela he would be absorbed in it. When there is discourse or discussion on something he would enjoy it wholeheartedly as a prime listener. He was like Bhagwan Vishnu described in this verse

अनेक रूप रूपाय विष्णवे प्रभविष्णवे ।

I bow to Vishnu who has a form which includes all forms

MaharajJi would teach people according to their natural inclination (निष्ठा). He would lead an Upasaka of God with form in the same direction, and as for the Upasaka of unqualified God, he would help them understand the nature of Brahman. He would keep the students of these two paths separate, saying that one should proceed in whatever path one is naturally inclined to (has निष्ठा in). It is difficult for common people to understand texts like Yoga-Vasistha; There for such people, MaharajJi would make arrangements for Ramayana, Gita, Bhagavatam and Bhakta-mala (a garland devotees in Hindi) . There would be dramas played time to time on Ramayana (called Ramleela), on Krishna (Rasaleela) and on the life of Chaitanya Maha-Prabhu (called Chaitanya Leela) and such others. They would have good influence on the hearts of devotees.

MaharajJi was very much fond of feeding people. Whenever there was festival (celebration) अनुष्ठान in the ashram, people would gather in large numbers. MaharajJi would make sure that nobody would go hungry and nobody would miss any dish. He would say, happiness in eating pertains to Jiva and the

happiness of feeding belongs to Ishvara.

The reputation of Baba's Shri Krishna-ashram reached far and wide. There always used to be a large gathering of devotees and seekers. All the people who ever came in contact with him were benefitted and would certainly progress in spiritual growth. Whatever is a person's fitness and natural inclination (aptitude), he would guide him in the same direction. He would lay a great emphasis on purity in life.

EMPHASIS ON PRACTICE

Along with dispassion (वैराग्यं) he would stress the importance of अभ्यास i.e. practice. Regarding practice, he would say, referring to his own experience.

आतिवाहिक देहोऽयं शुद्धचिद्व्योम केवलम् ।
आधिभौतिकतां नीतं पश्याभ्यासविजृम्भितम् ।।

What is only the pure consciousness appears, due to constant wrong thinking (i.e. अभ्यास) to be a hard physical body. See, this is the effect of practice! There fore it is necessary to constantly practice the opposite one.

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Loose practice (i.e. casual and inconsistent) won't work. One needs to practice consistently with alert and attentive mind.

There are three stages of practice-

1. Understanding oneself to be different from the physical body. When this practice becomes perfect, one develops the identification with the subtle body.
2. After this, experiencing the detachment from the objects of senses. As a result of this practice, the vision shifts from the subtle body and abides in the causal body.
3. There after comes the experience of separation from pain and pleasure. With the practice (third stage) the vision or identification shifts from all the four functions of the mind and abides in the self.

Life is wasteful without practice and dispassion. If one keeps Satsanga but does not practice, what is the use of it? It is like studying Ramayana and not be a devotee of Rama, or studying Bhagavatam and not be a devotee of Krishna. One gets or attains the experience (of the self) only by consistent practice and thereby destroying (or erasing) the vasanas completely. Merely by studying the scriptures nothing fruitful will happen. With vasanas still lingering, the mind cannot find peace. It is that mind alone which is free from vasanas

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is fit to contemplate on the truth. Only with consistent practice, the vasanas get uprooted and the truth is found. For the elimination of the vasanas, one should always be dispassionate to the sense-objects, and maintain the Godly form of mind . By self-control, one can drop the love for a few objects but the love for all the objects cannot go unless one develops love for God. It is only the effect of practice that one does not feel best for mother and sister, when one is in their company, because the feeling of mother and sister is strongly entrenched.

MaharajJi believed that the relish of tongue is the root cause of all evils. Once he narrated an event like this, - "I was studying in the school of king Krishna-chand. One day the students beat up the cook for the simple reason that he had not cooked kichdi. Since then, I noted it in my mind that the craving (of tongue) for taste is the root of all evils. जितं सर्वं जिते रसे। All is conquered when the tongue is conquered. जिह्वोपस्थ जयी धृतिः That alone is courage which masters the tongue and genitals. Hence, I had determined to conquer the tongue and genital, because control of these two is victory over all".

Discussing the course of sadhana useful to everybody, MaharajJi would repeat these ten items

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for counteracting the bad-vasanas
दुर्वासना प्रतीकार दशकम्

जिह्वोपस्थ-सुखं भ्रमं त्यज मनः पर्यन्त दुःखेक्षणात्
पारुष्यं मृदुभाषणात् त्यज वृथालापाश्रमं मौनतः ।
दःसङ्गं त्यज साधुसङ्गमबलात् गर्वं तु भङ्गेक्षणात्
निन्दा दुःखमनिन्द्यदेवमुनिभिर् निन्दा कथासम्स्मृतौ ।।

O mind! Seeing sorrow in all the sense-object contacts, give up the delusion of happiness. Give up the sharpness of tongue by adopting soft words. Keep away the bad company, by keeping always the company of good people. Give up the ego by remembering that it always feels hurt. Give up the sorrow born of others' abusing you, remembering that even the Gods and Rishis and saints who are not to be abused are found to be abused.

STEADINESS OF ASANA (आसन) AND PRANA

MaharajJi would repeatedly suggest that steadiness in a sitting posture and mind's freedom from any wish or decision - both these are very much necessary. Talking about the connection of mind and prana (the vital force) MaharajJi would say, 'Body is heavy due to (vata) prana and Kapha (water), but when pitta increases, it becomes light heat which is the character of pitta accounts for the power like that of electricity. When asana, sitting posture and prana are steady

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the body develops an energy like electricity. Again when the body becomes active, the electricity (psychic energy) of the body goes away. If the (psychic) energy is retained the body becomes healthy.

To keep the posture steady one should make a samkalpa (or an auto-suggestion) as follows -'I shall remain firm and steady just like god shesha remains perfectly steady and does not shake even a bit. I am the witness of body and prana . The body and the prana are the play of God and I am only watching them quietly and neutrally.

One should practice being a witness of the state of body and prana (without getting involved, without being affected and not identifying with them) to achieve this; attention should be focused on one's navel. When the body is stationary and if the prana becomes over active, one should understand that one is getting drowsy and sleepy, i.e. the mind is heading towards laya, sleep. When the mind merges (surrenders) in to prana tamo guna rises; whereas, if the prana merges in (surrenders to) the mind, satva-guna rises. On increasing of Tamo-guna prana (breath) moves fast. When satva-guna increases prana becomes steady. When the mind starts working through prana, rajo-guna increases. In that case, though the movement of prana remains normal, the mind starts entertaining willful thoughts and counter thoughts

(संकल्प विकल्प) Then if the mind is focused on the aim, while not encouraging the willful thoughts, it becomes quiet.

One should achieve the steadiness of the sitting posture. While carrying out all the various activities of life, whenever one needs to sit, one should sit only in a steady posture. Posture should not be changed until pain is felt in the body. Steadiness in sitting comes with practice in a few days with the prana getting steady, all other विकार get aberrations solved automatically for instance, the pain of hunger and thirst goes away; urination and excretion become moderate, kapha gets cleaned, Brahmacharya comes effortlessly. On prana getting steady, one becomes free from mental impurities, like even a child.

ACHIEVING STEADINESS OF MIND

As for how to a witnessing seer MaharajJi would say, 'It is proper to accept that body and Prana belong to God. We are separate from (or unlike) body and prana. Surrendering them to God one should experience that 'I am a witness'. One should feel that 'whatever is seen like black, yellow, green and red, etc, I am different unlike all those forms. Later on one should also see that 'I am free from pain and pleasure, like and dislike, joy and sorrow all of which are

only imaginations of the mind. To attain this, one should pay attention to the functions of mind, body and speech. While watching the mind, one should see what kind of thoughts (wishes) it entertains, pure or impure. Similarly, one should try to keep the body steady and at the same time, keep the speech controlled. There is a strong and mutual relation ship between body, mind and speech. If one of them is disturbed, all of them get disturbed. Hence one should keep all the three steady. One should not indulge in any wasteful activity. One should not move hands or legs without any purpose, nor should (one) do things like tearing the blade of grass etc. One should not speak unnecessarily, should not entertain evil thoughts. On avoiding such wasteful actions, mind becomes steady.

By looking at the entire world with a detached view, vasanas get erased and one attains the Samadhi without thoughts. Negation of the world is of two kinds- one with discrimination and the second with knowledge. In the first kind, one negates the world in order to separate it from one's self and see it as one self. But in the second type, one negates it because he sees it as

unreal. In the first kind of negation, the world exists as separate from one self where as in the second one, the enlightened one sees it as not existing at all.

When asked for a simple and easy method to control the turbulent mind, MaharajJi would say, 'जैसे उडि जहाज की पंछी पुनि जहाज पै आवै'
Just as a bird sitting on a ship which is far away from the shore, flies in air to some

distance but after some time finding no earth, comes back to ship. (think that mind is in such a condition) when mind does not find any support (or occupation) of objects it calms down. Mind can do only two things: either think of objects or Brahman. If it is not made to think of Brahman, it keeps thinking of worldly objects only. Hence, one should take it away from the worldly objects again and again and engage it with Brahman.

The Veda, says, 'सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म' All this is Brahman alone and 'नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन' here there is no multiplicity of nothing other than Brahman. If one repeatedly thinks of this fact, where is the room for worldly thinking? To achieve वैराग्यं dispassion from the worldly objects, it was advised that जन्म मृत्यु जरा व्याधि दुःखं दोषानुदर्शनम् one seeing continuously the pain and defect in birth, death, old age and disease, the true vairagya arises. Then the truth of such Vedic statements will be experienced at every step.

PURITY HOW TO ACHIEVE IT?

When asked regarding purity, MaharajJi would say, 'body gets pure on refraining from

telling lies, violence, and immoral sex, the speech gets pure with chanting God's name, the wealth gets pure with charity, and the mind gets pure with concentration and meditation. He would say, there are four qualities of a bad speech- 1) speaking in the tone of ordering (arrogant, aggressive tone) 2)screaming/shouting (rudeness impolite) 3) using indecent (obscene/fowl words 4) being sarcastic (or taunting/mocking). There are five qualities of a good speech -

1) Speaking beneficially.
2) Limited and necessary speech
3) Peaceful, relaxed while speaking
4) Sweet and soft speech
5) Pleasant speech.

If a person avoids the bad qualities and cultivates the good qualities, his speech becomes pure.

ELIMINATION OF LOVE OR HATRED

When asked as to, 'how to be free from likes and dislikes?' MaharajJi would explain elaborately the seekers as to what are likes and dislikes and how to eliminate them. When man forgets the morality and does not care for the code of good and ethical conduct, then he has come under (sway) of the likes and dislikes. In fact, ego is the root of likes and dislikes, because, it is from ego that the feeling of mine and others arises. The sense of mine is like सम… and the sense of other is a dislike द्वेष

If a person cannot drop the attraction for something in spite of facing neglect, insult and pain, then it is called a love, राग just like what the Gopis felt for Krishna. If mind loses interest in something so much that it arises only defects and all defects and nothing good in it, then it is certainly the hatred, like what Kamsa felt for Krishna. Love and hatred arise due to dwelling of mind on and qualities and defects, praise condemnation of the worldly objects and therefore these are the cause of samsara. One can eliminate love and hatred if one takes a vow or auto-suggestion to avoid condemnation and praise (and take them as they are). A perfectly enlightened person or a perfect devotee is free from love and hatred. Even a meditation on such a person can erase love and hatred in a sadhaka. On eliminating them, mind becomes light and satva becomes predominant in it. A person with love and hatred cannot progress on the golden footpath of spirituality. The truth free form distortions can be seen only by such Munis who are free from love, fear and anger- (Mandukya Karika says) the same

वीत-राग-भय-क्रोधैर्-मुनिभिः वेदपारगैः ।
निर्विकल्पो ह्ययं दृष्टः प्रपञ्चोपशमोऽद्वयः ।।

MaharajJi would say there can be love and hatred neither in (a Jnani) an enlightened one, nor in devotee, for a devotee sees the order of God in every event, where as a Jnani sees it as the experience due to Prarabdha, hence neither can have love and hatred. Thus अविवेक absence of discrimination is the root cause of love and hatred. On the dawn of विवेक (discrimination) mind loses it's strength, then how can love and hatred exist in it? It is true that love and hatred are not totally erased with discrimination alone, only a clue to eliminate them is found with discrimination. The total elimination of them is possible with only either love of God and the love of self. When there is love for God, the self, worldly love goes away. Iron cannot be cut without Iron. (which means love cannot be tackled without Godly love).

MEDITATION

Revealing the secret of Meditation, MaharajJi would say, in Meditation one should mainly think of one's chosen God (ishta devata). If the mind is not stationary, one should imagine the divine sports of God of meditation. If one feels like crying

one should cry thinking of a given (divine) play of one's chosen God. If one laughs, one should do so while thinking of his sport. There are plenty of sports of Rama in Ramayana and of Krishna in Bhagavatam. Contemplating on those divine sports is meditation.

If God with form is to be meditated, one should follow this - sit in a

comfortable posture with hands resting on knees. Keep your attention steady at the tip of the nose. Withdraw the mind from the sense objects. No thinking of past or future. Move the mind on the various beautiful limbs of God. Keep the attention of the mind on the parts one after another. Then visualize him alone with all attention. No thinking of anything other than the chosen God.

If practiced like this everyday, in a few days peace and happiness arise. Relaxation, horripilation, sweating, trembling and such other characters appear in body in a sequence. If persisted patiently the success will be attained. With the remembrance of God, good conduct, and humility one finds grace of God and success. As the thought of God persists, thought of the world wanes away. As the practice of meditation progresses, the mind gets immersed

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in love of God. This is the culmination of sadhana. This is the intuitive vision of God.

A BHAKTA AND JNANI

Who is fit for knowledge and who for Devotion? When the discussion turned to this MaharajJi would say a totally dispassionate one is fit for knowledge. A seeker with pure mind alone is fit for devotion. The sadhaka of Bhakti should keep the company of devotees and keep thinking of the qualities of God. He need not study or listen to those texts talking or propounding Advaita. The nature of God with Upadhi (adjunct) and without adjunct- both are self shining. Whichever form a lover loves, he loves God alone. God appears in various forms according to the inclination of his devotees only in order to make them happy. In reality, God is of the nature of सत् existence, चित् consciousness and आनन्द happiness. Tulsidas too corroborates this by saying-

निरगुन ब्रह्म सगुन भये कैसे । जल हिम उपल विलग नहि जैसे ।।

Brahman, in himself without any qualities, assumed the form with qualities which is not different like the water from the ice.

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I said once during my discourse like this -'When jiva feels, that he is an object of enjoyment of Ishvara that is Bhakti. A Bhakta has no interest in his own happiness, he is always engaged in making his beloved happy'. At the end of talk when the same topic was broached, MaharajJi said, 'the thing of absolute love for jiva is one's Own self, even when he thinks somebody else as the most beloved is only out of illusion. Jiva being consciousness, he can never become an object of enjoyment for somebody. In fact he is the experience or witnessing seer of all. A jiva, who is an enjoyer of objects, is called samsari- the worldly one, one who is an enjoyer of God he is devotee. Similarly, (one who is) en enjoyer of Samadhi is called a yogi and one who

sublates the enjoyership and the enjoyed, he is a Jnani. In a feeling that 'I am an object of enjoyment of God' there is divine and unworldly experience of bliss, a devotee enjoys it. 'I am enjoyed by God is a feeling enjoyed by jiva only. Hence the Vedic statement, आत्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति 'anything is dear only in the dearness of one's self'- forms/shows the nature of all the jivas without exception.

When asked, 'Who is a Jnani?' MaharajJi

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would answer, 'He alone is fit for knowledge, who has no attraction for or under no illusion of anything seen and heard. He should be dispassionate not only to the entire world but even to God. He alone is Jnani whose impurities (motives) and distractions (imagination) मल-विक्षेप are removed and is full of dispassion. Understanding of Jnani cannot be described fully. Roughly we can describe like this -
1) a least Jnani understands that world is mithya or illusory 2) a lesser Jnani understands that world is like a dream, and 3) a perfect Jnani understands that the world is completely non-existent, it never existed.

MaharajJi would say- Knowledge is of two types - one gained by hearing and another by direct experience. The former one can not be called बोध.. or understanding at all . Two things are required for the experiential knowledge - awakening of discrimination (विवेक) and purity of the mind. The Viveka is of two kinds, - one discrimination between what is permanent and what is impermanent - and the second one is discriminating the truth from the untruth. The first discrimination can come even in a state of ignorance. With in the non-eternal world - the division of permanent and impermanent is made. The mind has two states - the cause and the effect. The causal

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state is considered as permanent and the effect as impermanent. In fact, both of these are non-eternal. But, on the contrary, in the discrimination of the truth, witness is completely separate from the world. But this too cannot be called complete understanding; for, even in this, what is witnessed still exists as something separate from the witness. Continuing this Viveka (enquiry) further, one should put this question - Is all this of what is witnessed
different from one self or just one self alone? When its oneness is determined, one understands that which is witnessed is totally non-existent अत्यन्ताभाव and one abides in the non-dual truth.

What is jivan-mukti, liberation before death? MaharajJi would reply - Just as, when you are abused or praised in an unknown language, your mind is not disturbed even a bit, similarly when abused or praised in familiar language if you are neither disturbed nor elated, then you are a jivan-mukta.

A Jivan-mukta or Jnani or an enlightened one is a person who has no self-identity or self-image (what so ever) of being either a jiva or Brahman or anything else, and who carries out empirically all his activities normally, but in

absolute reality he sees everything as totally non-existent अत्यन्ताभाव and for who even the illusoriness of the phenomenal world has disappeared, he alone is

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an enlightened person for whom even the thought of either something has happened or something has not happened has disappeared completely. If something has happened, then there arises love for the empirical existence, and if something has not happened, then hatred arises. The enlightened person is beyond both love and hatred.

THE END OF WORLDLY LEELA OF BABAJI

In the Sri Krishna-ashram at Brindavan, the happiness (alone) would continuously shower always in the holy presence of pujya MaharajJi. He would say, 'This ashram is in fact Vaikuntha itself. His vision of life and vision of Brahman were identical. Neither the most horrible insult nor the grandest honour would ever disturb his natural composure. He was an epitome of generosity, forgiveness and freedom from annoyance. He would also say, 'Wherever you take me, and whatever (trying) conditions you put me in, you never see even a trace of anger'. Truly, neither the biggest calamity, nor any such external event would ever touch him.

Once, the late Pandit Sunderlal pleaded MaharajJi with his deeply (trembling) voice, 'Baba, all are ruining you (i.e. your health) Would you please take care?' MaharajJi replied 'Panditji, should I lose my nature and run after these fools with a stick (in hand).

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I am like a university professor, and hence only hint at things (and not a primary school teacher who dictates with authority). Let people follow them if they wish to, or else let them get lost. The food is served in a plate, eating and chewing is their job'. Hearing this reply, Panditji would comment, 'He is not a Baba (an authoritarian guru) but a mother.' Regarding a mother it is said, कुपुत्रो जायेत क्वचिदपि कुमाता न भवति ।

A son born to a woman can turn out to be a wicked one (to his mother) but there is no mother who is wicked to her son. Yielding to the request of blind and sentimental devotees, MaharajJi had to try many dishes many times in a single day. Told umpteen times not to insist MaharajJi for eating people would not need. If told upon his bodily health as it must. He fell diabetic and body swelled. The condition was getting critical with each passing day. Her Holiness Mata Anandamayi (of Bengal) requested him, 'Father, if you make a wish (samkalpa) you will get well'. But, why would he do it? In those days he would be humming like this-

गोवर्धन कूँ जाऊँ वीर, ना मानै मोरो मनवा ।

Even if I go to Govardhana mountain, (which fulfills) all wishes would not entertain any wish.

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A programme was chalked out to help him recover his health in Hoshiarpur. A pilgrimage to Punjab was started, but later on the plan was changed and retuned to Brindavan from Sirhind. With each passing day, the condition of the body was getting worse.

It was on Chaitra-Krishna-Chaturdasi of 2005 Vikram era, Mata Ananda mai was leaving for Kashi and Hari Baba for Jhusi (Prayaga), MaharajJi walked up to the car to see them off. In the corning discourse of the day, MaharajJi spoke explaining the Gita verse - अत्यन्ताभाव जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युः ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च । In the afternoon session of Satsanga, Bhagavata was being read and MaharajJi was listening sitting there in his (usual) Samadhi. There were around twenty five listeners seated in front of him.

Suddenly there came a person from behind, called Thakur Das who looked half-disturbed. He swiftly lifted a chopper and forcefully hammered, thrice on the head of MaharajJi. It made a burrow of 4 inches deep on his head. With the first wound MaharajJi's hand reached/went to his head and a finger got chopped off. Neither a scream, nor a call for help nor a panic. But people rushed for a doctor. When MaharajJi regained consciousness, he asked, 'What is happening here?' as if the wound was on somebody's body and not on his.

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Uttering Omkara he closed his eyes that were never to open. The saints put his body in jala-samadhi i.e. (immersed) in the water of Yamuna. As was his holy living so was his holy Nirvana, i.e. leaving the body.

In 2019 Vikram Era, on Shivaratri day, his idol for worship was installed with celebration. The viewers say it is not his mere image but MaharajJi himself is alive sitting here, and radiating his sweet smile as well as giving assurance saying,
अहं त्वा सर्व पापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ।
Come! I liberate you from all sins, do not grieve.
My crores of salutations at the feet of MaharajJi of such holy fame.